

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

197 to that of other Gondi dialects and of Hindi, of which the latter at least is widely known.

OUTLINE GRAMMAR

● 193 **Nouns.** These are never inflected and there is no distinction of form between singular and plural. The oblique cases are indicated by postpositions. Genders are very rarely indicated and play little part in the grammar of the language, though they do exist in the minds of the speakers. They are two in number, masculine and feminine-neuter. The former includes only males of the human species and the latter covers the rest of creation, whether male, female or inanimate. The commonest postpositions are as follows:

- tu*, *he*, or *nu*, indicate the accusative
- nu*, *na*, *ta*, or *na* meaning 'of' (genitive)
- tu* or *he* meaning 'to' (dative)
- te* or *tana* meaning 'with' or 'from' (comitative and ablative)
- de* meaning 'with' (instrumental) is only used of things
- te* or *tana* meaning 'in' or 'on' (locative)

All these can be used with any noun, the choice of alternatives apparently being governed by considerations of euphony. For example *lon*, a house, usually takes those postpositions which begin with 't' and elides its final 'n'; thus, *lots* = of a house, *lots* = in a house, and so on. There is no justification for distinguishing declensions.

Adjectives. These also are inflected neither for number, gender nor case. The language is well supplied with simple and compound adjectives, but the primitive feature of the language is that simple adjectives sometimes have to be expressed in a compound form, e.g. *bata hilwa* = poor, its literal meaning being 'without anything'.

The verbal noun is sometimes used as an adjective in the same way as the passive past participle in other languages, e.g. *murcha*, shut, from *murchana*, to shut.

Comparison is normally expressed, as in other Indian languages, by using the positive form of the adjective followed by the postposition *tana*, from. There is, however, a single interesting exception, *nala*, 'good', having the comparative and superlative form *nalator*. Syntactically this is used as other adjectives are with *tana*.

The superlative is expressed similarly to the comparative, as in Hindi with the use of the words *sabhi mul*, 'all'; e.g. *sabhi mul tana perhe*, 'last of all'.

Pronouns and Pronominal Adjectives. The only remarkable feature of these is that there is a distinct word for 'we', namely *mamat*, usually shortened in conversation to *mat*. This is one of the very few plural forms in the language. I = *nana*, thou and you = *nima* and or = *he*, *she*, or *they*. Another interesting feature is that pronouns have inflected forms. *Nona* produces *na*, *nima* produces *ni*, or produces *on*, and *mamat* produces *ma*.

Pronominal adjectives are distinct adjectives and not merely the genitives of pronouns, except in the case of *ona*, *his*. They are *nana* or *na* = my, *nima* or *ni* = yours, and *mama* or *ma* = ours.

Numerals. Up to and including 6, the cardinal numbers are almost identical with those in Telugu. From 7 to 19 inclusive the Hindi numerals are used, after which comes *korek*, 20. Beyond this the word *kori* = score, is used in combination with other numbers. This word is of wide distribution in Eastern India, being used in Oriya among other languages, but is probably Dravidian in origin. For 100 the Hindi word *sau* is frequently used, as is the Urdu word *hazar*, a thousand, to denote vaguely large numbers. An interesting feature of the numerals is that the word for 2 has a masculine form *iru* and a neuter form *rend* or *rand*. This is one of the few cases where gender is distinguished.

Ordinals are the same as cardinals with the sole exception of *onda*, first.

Frequency is expressed by the word *wala*, time, probably borrowed from Marathi, which is added to the cardinal number; and multiplicity is expressed in the same way.

APPENDIX TWO

Demonstrative, Interrogative, and Relative Pronouns and Adjectives. The demonstrative pronouns do not inflect but distinguish genders. The demonstrative adjectives are the same. This-*or* or *was* masculine, and *id*, feminine-neuter. That-*or*, masculine, and *ad*, feminine-neuter.

The interrogative pronoun 'who' has various forms in different areas, those which I have heard being *henor*, *bor*, *benon*, and *ben*. There is also a feminine and neuter form *bed* or *bad*, which.

There are no true relative pronouns. Relative clauses are avoided completely by such means as 'that man came, to him I said', for 'I said to the man who came'.

There are no reflexive pronouns, the sense of 'self' being rendered by an emphatic suffix 't' or 'e'.

Postpositions and Adverbs. The structure of the language in this respect is precisely the same as that of Hindi and other similar Indian languages. Thus there are a number of true postpositions and a number of adverbs used as postpositions by being linked to the noun either by the genitive or ablative postpositions. For example 'in front of the house' would be *son ta muns*. There are also pure adverbs of place, time and manner, which have no peculiar features.

Verbs. There are no regular conjugations in this language, though all the verbs are conjugated with a remarkable degree of similarity. In many respects the conjugation of verbs is close in manner to Hindi and other Indian languages, and so calls for no particular mention in an outline of this type. One or two peculiarities, however, are of importance.

Normally the second person singular and plural are the same and make no distinction of gender. The first person has different forms for the singular and plural but makes no distinction of gender. The third person is the same for singular and plural but has different forms for the masculine on the one hand and the feminine-neuter on the other.

The tenses which have no particularly interesting features are the aorist present, the continuing present, the simple future, the imperfect, the past aorist, and the pluperfect.

The continuing present, the imperfect, and the pluperfect tenses are constructed by means of participles used with the auxiliary verb 'to be' as in Hindi.

The imperative, the infinitive, the participles and the verbal nouns are for the most part unremarkable.

A peculiar feature of the language is the existence of a conditional tense. An example of this from the verb *poysans*, to seize, is typical of all verbs:

1st person singular	<i>poysen</i>
2nd person singular	<i>poysin</i>
3rd person singular	<i>poysor</i>
1st person plural	<i>poysowon</i>

This tense can be used equally for future or past conditional clauses, but in Bastar State it can only be used in the apodosis of a conditional sentence, not in the protasis. The protasis is always expressed by a rather clumsy participial construction, the compound parts of which are not found elsewhere in the language. Thus, 'if he had come' is *or malle*. *Ke* is a postposition meaning 'by way of' or 'by reason of'. *Was* appears to be a past participle active, which is never used in any other construction. The words might, therefore, be literally translated 'by reason of him having come'.

Although it is convenient to regard the infinitive as normal and regular, in fact there is no real infinitive in the language in the English grammatical sense of the word. *Poysans* meaning 'to seize' is really the genitive of a verbal noun *poysin*, and this fact is extremely clear from the general use of this so-called infinitive in the language. Occasionally, however, this genitive form is itself used as a verbal noun and also as a supine similar to the Latin supine terminating in 'um'.

Participles normally in use are the present and the past participles active and past participle passive. Apart from the latter there is no such thing in this language as the passive voice, and any such idea has to be expressed either by an intransitive verb, a paraphrase introducing an active verb, or a paraphrase containing the passive past participle.

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193 The language has a noun of agency formed from the verb, e.g. *poysalur* meaning 'one who seizes'. An unusual participle is that of resemblance, e.g. *poyslap* meaning 'as if seizing'.

Typical of Gondi dialects in general and also found in the Muria dialect are the negative tenses and the negative imperative. The former is used to express negative action in past, present, or future without the addition of any negative particle. The negative imperative is formed by adding the prohibitive suffix *ma* to the root of the verb, and this suffix may be of Sanskrit derivation and related to the forms *mat* in Hindi and *ma* in Pushtu and Persian. Very rarely one hears a negative gerund formed from the root of the verb and the termination *mohak*.

Causal verbs are formed according to regular rules, as are compound verbs. There are no inceptive or desiderative verbs, but there is a potential verb *parana* which is used in a variety of ways corresponding to the Hindi *sahna* and *parna*.